**World War I (a.k.a. The Great War): Three Takeaways**

1. The causes were completely idiotic. The more you understand why this war happened, the more it seems totally incomprehensible. There was no great moral issue at stake (despite what British and American propaganda said about the German military’s treatment of Belgium); no “good guys” and “bad guys” like in World War II.
2. The way this war was fought is emblematic of just how destructive humans can be to each other. When we evaluate with the benefit of historical hindsight, it appears that the men ordering soldiers into combat placed no value on the lives of those soldiers.
3. This war remade the world order. It was caused, in large part, by the crack-up of old empires, and a new order emerged after the war, with the U.S. playing a much greater role in international affairs. It further propelled Western powers like the U.S., France, and Britain into Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Marxism gained a political home in the Soviet Union. The conditions of peace set in the Treaty of Versailles set the stage for economic depression and deep resentment in Germany that would usher in the rise of fascism.